|  |
| --- |
| **THE ETERNAL NOW**  **Richard Rohr**    Jesus’ primary metaphors for the Eternal Now are “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of heaven.” He is not talking [about](https://franciscans-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/cschafer_franciscans_org_au/EStTjcRKPmtKtRgwRuDH1jsBjOC96o7M8EpGJHJzTH5yIw) a far-off celestial heaven. “Look around you, look at the fields; already they are ready for harvest! Already the reaper is being paid his wages, already he is bringing in the grain for eternal life, and thus sower and reaper rejoice together” (John 4:35-36, Jerusalem Bible). Notice that Jesus says already three times. He is trying to tell us that there is a way that we can live connected to the Real and to the Eternal in this world. That path is surrendering to the here-and-now, whatever it offers us. We might just call this “the will of God,” yet it feels like nothing, like nowhere (now-here), and still, it is where everything always happens to us. So be sure to be here now—and not somewhere else! If our minds or hearts are elsewhere, nothing really happens to us that matters or lasts.  Nondual knowing is learning how to live satisfied in the naked now, which some called “the sacrament of the present moment.” This consciousness will teach us how to actually experience our experiences, whether good, bad, or ugly, and how to let them transform us. Words by themselves divide and judge the moment; pure presence lets it be what it is, as it is.  As long as we deal with life as a set of universal abstractions, we can pretend that our binary coordinates are true. But once we touch concrete reality—ourselves, someone we love, actual moments—we find that reality is almost always a mixture of good and bad, dark and light, life and death. “God alone is good,” Jesus tells the rich young man (Mark 10:18). To touch upon Reality requires a both/and synthesis rather than an either/or differentiation where we throw part of reality out (the part we don’t like). The nondual mind is open to everything that comes its way. It does not even deny sin or evil. It is capable of listening to the other, to the body, to the heart, to all the senses. It begins with a radical yes to each moment and to all other people.  When we can be present in this way, we will know the Real Presence. We will still need and use our dualistic mind to get started, but now it is in service to the greater whole rather than just the small self. Start with dualistic clarity, if you can, and then move toward nondual compassion for your response.  John Duns Scotus (1266–1308), one of our great Franciscan teachers, said that God did not create genus and species; God only created what Duns Scotus called “this-ness,” in Latin haecceity. He said that until we can experience each thing in its specific “thisness,” we will not easily experience the joy and ubiquity of Divine Presence. In other words, I can’t be present to all women in general. I’ve got to be present to this woman, right here, right now, in her specificity and particularity.  The here-and-now has the power to become the gateway and the breakthrough point to the universal. The concrete, the specific, the physical, the here-and-now—when we can be present to it in all of its ordinariness—becomes the gateway to the Eternal. Please trust me on that and don’t dare dismiss it until and unless you have tried it. One completely loved thing is all it takes. |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Gateway to Presence:** If you want to go deeper with today’s meditation, take note of what word or phrase stands out to you. Come back to that word or phrase throughout the day, being present to its impact and invitation.      Adapted from Richard Rohr, [*A Spring Within Us: A Book of Daily Meditations*](https://email.cac.org/t/d-l-pjkkhut-jlthjruiyd-r/) (CAC Publishing: 2016), 314-315; and  [*The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See*](https://email.cac.org/t/d-l-pjkkhut-jlthjruiyd-y/) (The Crossroad Publishing Company: 2009), 12, 56; and  A New Way of Seeing . . . A New Way of Being: Jesus and Paul, disc 1 (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2007), [CD](https://email.cac.org/t/d-l-pjkkhut-jlthjruiyd-j/), [MP3 download](https://email.cac.org/t/d-l-pjkkhut-jlthjruiyd-t/).  Copyright © 2018 by CAC. Used by permission of CAC. All rights reserved worldwide. Sign up for the Meditations by going to <https://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/> |